

REMARKS

The Examiner identified certain instances of perceived indefiniteness in claims 22-24. By the amendments contained herein, the language suggested by the Examiner has been adopted to address the specifically identified instances.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 under 35 U. S. C. § 102. The Examiner relied upon Egnelov, U. S. Patent 3,701,389 (hereinafter Egnelov) to support this rejection.

Egnelov, discloses a device that works as follows: In Fig. 1a is illustrated how locking device/latch dogs 6 are connected to an accompanying device/retrieving device 8 during insertion of the inner core assembly 3 in the drill stem 1. Egnelov, col. 2, line 12 *et seq.* When the inner core tube assembly 3 has reached its proper drilling and core receiving position (Egnelov does not describe how this is determined), it is released from the retrieving device by means of releasing sleeve 14. This release is achieved as described in Egnelov, col. 1, lines 53-59. The axially shiftable releasing sleeve 14 is shifted downwards, toward the spear 13a (refer to enclosed figure) of the coupling means 13 so as to press apart the arms 10 of the latch dogs 6, which makes it possible for the spear 13a to be released and the coupling means 13 to be withdrawn.

From Egnelov's Fig. 1a is clear that when the "rear" arms 10 of the latch dogs 6 are pressed outwards by the sleeve 14, the forward arms 15 of the latch dogs are pressed inwards and toward each other even further than before. It is not until after the spear 13a of Egnelov's coupling means 13 has been completely withdrawn from its location between the rear arms 10 that the forward arms 15 can move away from each other and enter into locking contact with the shoulders 17. It is this moving away from each other and enter into locking contact with the shoulders 17 that achieves mechanical locking of the inner tube in relation to the drill stem, which is illustrated in Egnelov's Fig. 1b.

If Egnelov's coupling means 13 and spear 13a are regarded as a gripping means of an accompanying device, the mechanical release of the gripping means occurs in a first step, and the mechanical locking of the inner tube in relation to the drill stem occurs in a second step which can only take place after the first step has been completed. These two steps cannot take place simultaneously. Nor are they achieved in the same movement, since the forward arms 10 are moved in one direction and kept still while the spear 13a is withdrawn during the first step. Then, during the second step, the arms 10 are moved in the opposite (outward) direction in order to engage with the shoulders 17. Consequently,

independent claims 1, 9 and 10 clearly distinguish patentably over Egnelov. As a result, dependent claim 2 is also patentable, at least for these reasons.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that his claims 1-4, 6-12, 15 and 18-24, as presented herein, are in condition for favorable consideration, culminating in allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be due to constitute this a timely response to the December 10, 2003 official action to Applicant's undersigned counsel's deposit account 10-0435. A duplicate copy of this authorization is enclosed for that purpose.

Respectfully submitted,



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